Decision making in the 2012 Elections

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Public Policy Institute of California
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Decision making in the 2012 Elections

- Validating Likely Voter Measures in 2012 Pre-Election Polling
- The Impact of the Presidential Debates on Undecided and Persuadable Voters
- The RAND Continuous 2012 Presidential Election Poll
- The Influence of Social Desirability in the Rise of Political Independents
Validating Likely Voter Measures in 2012 Pre-Election Polling

Jocelyn Kiley, Pew Research Center
Scott Keeter, Pew Research Center
Matt Frei, Pew Research Center
Seth Motel, Pew Research Center
Leah M. Christian, Pew Research Center
Michael Dimock, Pew Research Center
Michael P. McDonald, George Mason University
Matthew Berent, Matt Berent Consulting
Jon Krosnick, Stanford University
Validating Likely Voter Measures in 2012 Pre-Election Polling

### Identifying Likely Voters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modified Perry-Gallup index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses established correlates of vote propensity first developed and validated in 1950s &amp; 60s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well does the index work today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the individual level?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the aggregate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For different demographic groups?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Validating Likely Voter Measures in 2012 Pre-Election Polling

Identifying Voters and Nonvoters in Official Voting Records

1. Match to marketing database
   - Phone #: 9%
   - Phone # and name: 54%
   - Phone #, name, address: 37%
2. Match to voter database
   - Phone #: 4%
   - Phone # and name: 28%
   - Phone #, name, address: 68%
3. 56% matched with voter records
Validating Likely Voter Measures in 2012

Pre-Election Polling

Identifying Voters and Nonvoters in Official Voting Records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly correlated with survey registration/turnout predictors</th>
<th>% Matched</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voter</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not likely voter</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not registered</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Validating Likely Voter Measures in 2012 Pre-Election Polling

### Likely Voter Index Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matched sample registered voters</th>
<th>% of RVs</th>
<th>% Voted</th>
<th>Obama advantage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>+4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Score on 9-pt LV scale</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 &lt; 9</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>+16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 &lt; 8</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>+12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 &lt; 7</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>+10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 6</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>+23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>+2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Validating Likely Voter Measures in 2012
Pre-Election Polling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Category</th>
<th>Percent RV predicted likely</th>
<th>Predicted difference from overall</th>
<th>Actual difference from overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>-14</td>
<td>-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Refused</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>-22</td>
<td>-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Impact of the Presidential Debates on Undecided and Persuadable Voters

Curtiss Cobb, GfK Knowledge Networks
Charles DiSogra, Abt SRBI
Jordon Peugh, GfK Knowledge Networks
Sarah Dutton, CBS
Anthony Salvanto, CBS
Kathleen Connolley, GfK Knowledge Networks
The Impact of the Presidential Debates on Undecided and Persuadable Voters

CBS News Instant Polls

CBS sought to gauge the unfiltered opinion of undecided and persuadable voters immediately after each debate and prior to being influenced by pundit commentary.

To Do So

✓ Pre-identify registered voters that were:
  1. Undecided or persuadable
  2. Intended to watch the debate
  3. Agree to participate in follow-up survey immediately after the debate

✓ Collect all the interviews simultaneously immediately after each debate concluded.

✓ Weight, analyze and report the data within the first two hours after each debate.

✓ Be scientifically rigorous and generalizable
2. Did a re-evaluation of debate performance occur in the days between the debates and the election?

Re-Evaluating Winners and Losers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debates</th>
<th>1st Debate</th>
<th>2nd Debate</th>
<th>3rd Debate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Debate Night</td>
<td>Election Time</td>
<td>Debate Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romney</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tie</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Impact of the Presidential Debates on Undecided and Persuadable Voters

Re-Evaluating Winners and Losers

Election Day Re-Evaluation of 1st Debate Performance

- Obama won on debate night: 25
- Romney won on debate night: 95
- Tie on debate night: 66

Colors represent:
- Blue: Obama
- Red: Romney
- Green: Tie
The Impact of the Presidential Debates on Undecided and Persuadable Voters

Re-Evaluating Winners and Losers

Probability to Switch Evaluations

Number of Correct Answers to Knowledge Questions

- 44%
- 32%
3. How predictive of actual vote behavior are instantaneous perceptions of debate performance compared to perceptions measured at a later time?

Predicting Actual Vote

Asked “undecided and persuadable” debate watchers who they voted for/were going to vote for in our election time follow-up survey.

Used logistic regression to predict voting for Obama:

- Indicator variables for who panelists reported won debates in the CBS Instant Polls and the election time follow-up survey.
- Control for demographics, partisanship (party ID), and ideology (lib-con)

Predicted Probability of Voting for Obama

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CBS Instant Poll (Time 1)</th>
<th>Election Time Follow-up (Time 2)</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thought Obama Won Debate</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>13.19***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIE</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0.53(ns)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The RAND Continuous 2012 Presidential Election Poll

- Internet panel (RAND American Life Panel)
- Probabilistic questions
- Weighted on 2008 voting
- 3600 people in final panel
- Weighted daily and was poststratified
- **WHY probabilistic questions?**
  - No likely voter model
  - No undecideds
  - Can detect small shifts in preferences
Figure 3: Average stated intention to vote by candidate preference

Intention to vote

Note. An estimate within the shaded area indicates that the difference is not statistically significant at the 5% level. See text for a brief description of the indicated events.
Figure 4: Forecasted share of the votes for Obama and Romney

Election Forecast

Note. An estimate within the shaded area indicates that the difference is not statistically significant at the 5% level. See text for a brief description of the indicated events.
Figure 5: Average changes in reported likelihood of voting for Obama or Romney

Shifts Between Candidates

Note. An estimate within the shaded area indicates that the difference is not statistically significant at the 5% level. See text for a brief description of the indicated events.
Figure 6: Average subjective likelihoods that Obama or Romney will win the election.

Note. An estimate within the shaded area indicates that the difference is not statistically significant at the 5% level. See text for a brief description of the indicated events.
The Influence of Social Desirability in the Rise of Political Independents

Samara Klar, Northwestern University
Yanna Krupnikov, Northwestern University
The Influence of Social Desirability in the Rise of Political Independents

Partisanship Over Time

**Figure 1.1: Distribution of U.S. Party Identification, 1952-2012**

Self-reported political independence is increasing over time.

Image: *The Social Bases of Political Parties* by Ken Janda
The Influence of Social Desirability in the Rise of Political Independents

What Explains the Increase in Independents?

- Ideological Shifts?

Figure 8.2: Ideological Distribution, 1952-2012

Image: The Social Bases of Political Parties by Ken Janda... buy it on iTunes for $2.99!!
The Influence of Social Desirability in the Rise of Political Independents

Why the Increase in Independents?

The Influence of Social Desirability Bias

• Changes in reported partisanship are the result of social pressures.

• Partisanship is becoming socially undesirable

• Individuals are less willing to **outwardly display** their partisanship
Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:
Negative images of partisanship decrease the social desirability of partisans and increase reports of independence

Hypothesis 2:
High self monitors are particularly susceptible to adjusting their reported partisanship
The Influence of Social Desirability in the Rise of Political Independents

Empirical Test: A Survey Experiment

- YouGov sample of 800
- Post-Election (Feb 2013)
- Measures of partisanship in January 2012

Survey Procedure:
Respondents randomly assigned to read one news article:
- Article about partisan cooperation in Washington
- Article about partisan bickering in Washington
- Article about Groundhog Day (control)
The Influence of Social Desirability in the Rise of Political Independents

Consequence of Negative Image of Partisans

• High self-monitors identify as independent after receiving negative partisanship stimulus

But:
• No changes in ideology
• No change in issue preferences

Results robust when we control for:
  – Gender
  – Education
  – Age
  – Geographic location
  – Ideology (one year ago)
The Influence of Social Desirability in the Rise of Political Independents

Does Question Wording Influence Social Desirability Bias?

- **Gallup, Pew:** “In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an independent?”

- **ANES, ABC News/Washington Post:** "Generally speaking, do you usually consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an independent or what?"
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The Influence of Social Desirability in the Rise of Political Independents

Does Question Wording Influence Social Desirability Bias?

**Survey Procedure:**

1. Randomly assigned to read one news article:
   - Article about the importance of partisans
   - Article about partisan bickering in Washington
   - Article about Groundhog Day (control)

2. Respondents randomly assigned to
   - “As of today...”
   - “Generally speaking...”

3. Measure partisanship
The Influence of Social Desirability in the Rise of Political Independents

Independents Across Conditions
“As of today...” v. “Generally speaking...”

“As of today” leads to more reports of independents following the bickering treatment, compared to “Generally speaking”.

Notes on the use of these slides

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